



ECOLOGY TECHNICAL NOTE: PRELIMINARY BAT ROOST ASSESSMENT

PROJECT ADDRESS	121-131 Bell Lane, Bury, BL9 6BS
PROPOSED PLANS	Conversion of existing building at first floor and part ground floor to create 9 no. flats including new window and door openings; retention of existing retail use on part ground floor.
APPLICATION REF.	70955
DATE	13 th January 2025
AUTHOR	Ryan Knight BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist

INTRODUCTION

Knight Sky Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a preliminary bat roost assessment at 121-131 Bell Lane in relation to the proposed development plans for the property. The assessment was undertaken by Ryan Knight MCIEEM who holds a Level 2 Natural England Class Licence (ref. 2015-12611-CLS-CLS) for bats and has held this licence type for over 12 years. Ryan has also acted as the named ecologist on numerous European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licences issued by Natural England which covered several bat species and roost types.

This document presents the results of the bat survey and provides all the necessary data, assessment and guidance to satisfy the relevant planning and conservation policy obligations and legislative framework. The level of detail within this document is considered proportionate to the scale of the project, the location of the site and the previous ecology surveys that have been undertaken (see below). Figure 1 provides an aerial image of the property location.

Figure 1. Property location





METHODS

The preliminary bat roost assessment was undertaken in accordance with good practice guidelines (*Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 4th edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London. (Collins, J., (ed.) (2023))*) and the scope of the assessment was also designed in relation to the small-scale nature of the proposed works and the predicted degree of risk of impacts to bats. With this proportionate approach in mind, a desk top study was not considered to be required for the assessment.

A daytime visit to the property was undertaken on 6th January 2025. The assessment involved a visual search for evidence of bats and an assessment of the bat roost suitability of the property based on the extent and suitability of any potential roost features present. The property was fully accessed. It should be noted that the property did not have any loft spaces (see below).

The site visit was undertaken outside of the main active period for bats (April-October) when evidence of a bat roost is not as readily identifiable. However, the seasonal constraint did not present a significant limitation to the conclusions and recommendations made within this document. The main aim of the assessment was to evaluate the suitability of the property for use by bats - not to determine presence or absence.

RESULTS

Previous Assessments

The property was subject to a previous bat survey in 2021 entitled '*Daytime Bat Survey, 121-131 Bell Lane, Bury, Greater Manchester - September 2021*' (Rachel Hacking Ecology).

The current owner of the site does not own the rights to this report and in addition, the report findings are now out of date. Nonetheless, it can be confirmed that the previous report concluded that the property offered negligible bat roost suitability.

Property Description & Potential Roost Features

Photos of the property are provided at the foot of this document. The property comprises a brick built, two storey, terraced block which contained a former commercial unit and an attached vacant dwelling. The west gable of property and part of the frontage were rendered. A new roof had been fitted on the property over the courses of late 2024. The roof featured modern concrete roof tiles, plastic dry verge caps and new fascia boards. All new and existing fascia boards appeared to be well sealed with no suitable access gaps for bats. In addition, no potential roost features for bats were observed in the external brickwork.

Internally, there were no true roof voids; the entire upper floor was open from floor to ceiling. Several new roof timbers and a modern breathable roofing membrane had been installed. A section of the roof underside was clad with timbers boards; however, no potential roost features were observed in this section.

Overall, no bats, evidence of bats or potential roost features for bats were recorded.

Suitability of Surrounding Habitats

The property is located on a busy thoroughfare on the eastern outskirts of the centre of Bury. The urbanised location contains a mix of residential areas and commercial outlets. Green spaces within the locality are limited and fragmented. There appears to be a small grassland area with trees 45m north-east and the grounds of St Paul's Church is 125m south. Other green spaces include Hoyles Park, 315m east. Night time lighting levels are expected to be relatively high within the area.



Overall, with respect to the urbanised location and associated environmental factors, bat activity levels in the immediate area of the property are expected to be very low.

Overall Bat Roost Suitability

No evidence of bats was recorded and largely due to the condition of the property and the renovation works that had been undertaken including the new roof, the property was assessed as '**negligible**' in its bat roost suitability.

Nesting Birds

No evidence of nesting birds was observed. Largely due to the new roof, opportunities for nesting appeared to be very limited.

Other

No other potential ecological constraints to the proposal were encountered.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

No evidence of bats was identified and the property is considered to offer a negligible level of suitability to support bats. Therefore, it is concluded that **bats do not present a constraint to the development proposals** as the works will remain legally compliant with reference to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)). No further surveys or mitigation measures are recommended.

Enhancements

No bat boxes are advised to be installed at the site as the likelihood of the successful uptake of such boxes is considered to be very low. However, the development may wish to consider the installation of bird boxes such as house sparrow terrace nesting boxes.



PHOTOS

Photo 1.
Front (south)
elevation.



Photo 2.
Section of rear
(north) elevation.



Photo 3.
Further view of rear
elevation.





Photo 4.
West elevation.



Photo 5.
East gable.



Photo 6.
View of underside
of roof from upper
floor.

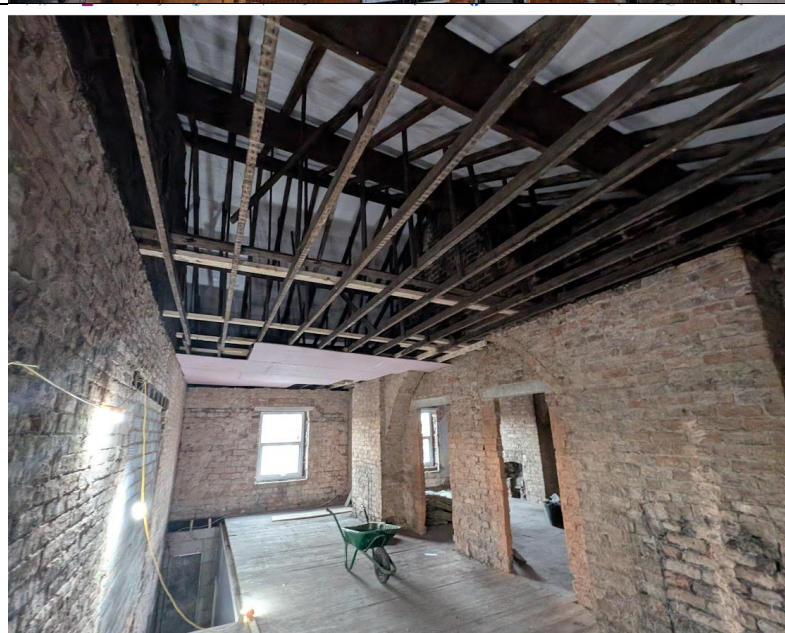




Photo 7.
View of timber clad
section of roof from
upper floor.

